

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well
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Consultative Committee

Campus Governance

10-9-2018

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Consultative Committee
Meeting minutes
Tuesday, October 9, 2018 (11:40, 122 Welcome Center)

Members: Esmira Alieva, Sarah Buchanan, Adrienne Conley, Ann DuHamel, Nancy Helsper, Isaac Hunt, Margaret Kuchenreuther, Kristi Smith

Guest: Dean Janet Ericksen

Minutes, respectfully submitted by Ann DuHamel

I. Discussion with the Dean:

- A. Welcome and introductions.
- B. Share with the Dean issues that have come to Consultative that we would like to discuss with her:

- 1. Interactions between Admissions and Academic Affairs. A campus member wrote to us:

“Why isn't there regular, sustained communication between Academic Affairs and Admissions? Admissions *counselors* should be visiting our classes, watching URS presentations, and asking us for sound bites about what is happening in the (frankly awesome) academic realm on this campus. And in turn, our programs should be giving them bullet points with quotable data, student success statistics, and other material they can draw on.

And why aren't the tour guides educated by academic affairs about the campus? Over the last few years I have started avoiding tours when I see them on campus because I am always embarrassed or sometimes horrified by what I hear the tour guides saying. For example, "UMM was a native American boarding school, which is really great. That they had a place to come learn." I can't tell you how many prospective students tell me that Admissions informed them that an exciting feature of UMM is that they can design their own major.

We should be having regular, mutually supportive conversations because we are all working for the same thing. We do academic affairs really well, and we should help Admissions (and Admissions should want us to).”

The discussion centered around contacting Admissions, who have in the past been responsive to requests to visit classrooms, and encouraging the person to contact the Director of Admissions directly. There are some current staffing issues; Admissions is trying to figure out a mechanism to make it happen. A more systematic, holistic approach would be good. Maybe a bi-annual meeting: what does Admissions need from academics? What do academics need from Admissions? The Dean said this is a good thing to bring up with the Chancellor as well, since Admissions reports directly to her. Faculty (and staff) are encouraged to participate in recruiting events; scheduling can make it tough to participate.

2. We have had inquiries into assessing the effectiveness and impact of the Writing for the Liberal Arts general education requirement and we'd be interested in hearing more about how the Curriculum Committee and Assessment Committee are approaching this topic and whether we could be of service.

The Dean's response:

She met with the Chair of the Assessment committee this summer. Looked at sample papers, determined a rubric. Read 50 WLA papers, scored on rubric, compared to Gen Ed description. The Chair of Assessment is aggregating results.

The ensuing discussion and conversation broadly covers WLA requirements, Gen Ed requirements, budget, American Indian Tuition Waiver.

Re: WLA: we need a comprehensive plan. Other colleges are requiring more writing, not less. Perhaps a session on teaching writing could be included in the faculty development day in the fall. Assessment seems to be telling us that students don't yet know how to write a good research paper in their first semester of college. One idea floated is a possible lab section with ICs, not graded. Could cover financial literacy, information literacy.

Once this catalog year is through the Curriculum Committee, the Dean plans to go back and look at Gen Eds. Maybe not revise the categories, but the ways in which people could meet them.

The point was made about the strategic visioning and goals: one of the goals is to reduce the number of Gen Eds. Remember these are suggestions. Goals statements are inherently and inevitably broad - they are proposals. Many majors look the same as years past, but maybe it is worth trying something new. Changing Gen Eds is tricky work - these requirements get at the core of what we want our students to learn, so it's fraught. People have different visions. We've agreed on this core. There might be a will not to change the core, but a will to change how we deliver the core. People get excited about possibilities.

Mellon planning goal - part is for summer course development - the foundation would pay you in the summer to do work on revising curriculum.

Discussion of budget, tuition waiver. How UMM contributes to the community and affects the whole area. Division of Social Sciences Chair Arne Kildegaard thought of having an endowed chair in Rural Studies, focused on student scholarship.

The Dean welcomes ideas from everyone. Other colleges, smaller than we are, offer same majors with fewer faculty. How can we be flexible.

It is noted that we need to offer languages, philosophy, etc., to be a liberal arts campus. Can we have a discussion about which majors are essential to have for a liberal arts education? What does our comparison group offer?

We need to look at what the requirements are, vs. really good aspirational campuses. Re-think what is needed for a student to get into grad school.

Can we do a better job explaining what a liberal arts degree does.

Recognition that it's hard to shift the national narrative re: liberal arts degrees.

When was the last time we had a U of M president speak about the liberal arts in positive terms?

It was noted that the U's Systems communication management group is working hard, moving in a positive direction.

The Dean welcomes thoughts and suggestions.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45